

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 FBIE-00 INSE-00

NSAE-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 OMB-01

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PROR, SREF

SUBJECT: REPORTED CHANGES IN SOVIET EMIGRATION PROCEDURES

1. DEPARTMENT IS REPEATING BY SEPTEL FULL TEXT OF JANUARY 18 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE BY TOTH REPORTING LIBERALIZATION IN SOVIET EXIT VISA PROCEDURES.

2. FYI DEPARTMENT'S PRESS GUIDANCE FOLLOWS:

3. Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION OR COMMENT ABOUT THE JANUARY 18 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE BY ROBERT TOTH REPORTING THAT THE USSR HAS LIBERALIZED ITS EXIT VISA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES?

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4. A. WE DO NOT YET HAVE CONFIRMATION OF THE CHANGES

REPORTED BY TOTH, ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN EARLIER INDICATIONS THAT THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES ARE REDUCING EXIT VISA APPLICATION FEES AND TAKING OTHER STEPS TO SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS OF APPLYING TO EMIGRATE. IF TOTH'S REPORT IS ACCURATE, THE CHANGES ARE A WELCOME STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. WE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY PLEASED IF, AS REPORTED BY TOTH, REFUSAL CASES WILL BE FORMALLY RECONSIDERED EVERY SIX MONTHS RATHER THAN EVERY YEAR. HOWEVER, UNTIL WE HAVE OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF THESE CHANGES AND MORE DETAIL ABOUT WHAT THEY MEAN IN TERMS OF THE ABILITY OF PEOPLE TO EMIGRATE WE WOULD NOT WISH TO EXAGGERATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE STEPS.

5. Q. ASSUMING THE REPORT IS ESSENTIALLY ACCURATE, DO YOU RELATE THIS CHANGE TO THE CSCE?

6. A. YES; ALTHOUGH WE WOULD WANT TO SEE HOW THE SOVIETS EXPLAIN IT. KISSINGER

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